

an absorbent body enclosed between the two surface layers,

wherein the article further exhibits a wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of the user, which is the region of the liquid-pervious surface layer which is intended to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,

wherein the liquid-pervious surface layer within the wetting region is constituted of hydrophilic absorbent material that is adapted to retain moisture, at least at the surface of the liquid-pervious surface layer which is intended to be facing the user during use so as to maintain the mucous membranes of the user moist, and that all remaining parts of the liquid-pervious surface layer are constituted of a hydrophobic material, and

wherein an extent of the wetting region is smaller than an extent of the absorbent body.

16. (Twice Amended) A method for maintaining a mucous membrane of a user moist with an absorbent article, the absorbent article including an absorbent body, a liquid impervious layer, and a liquid pervious layer, the liquid pervious layer constituting both a hydrophobic material and a hydrophilic absorbent material, where the hydrophilic absorbent material forms a wetting region of the liquid pervious layer that is a region that is intended to be first wetted by body fluid and all remaining parts of the liquid-pervious layer are hydrophobic, the absorbent body being enclosed between the liquid pervious layer and the liquid impervious layer, the method comprising:

wearing the absorbent article such that the wetting region is adjacent the mucous membrane of the user and the wetting region receives body fluids emitted from the user;

retaining at least a portion of the body fluids in the hydrophilic absorbent material;  
and  
maintaining the mucous membrane of the user moist with the body fluids retained in  
the hydrophilic absorbent material of the wetting region,  
wherein an extent of the wetting region is smaller than an extent of the absorbent  
body.

17. (Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein the wetting  
region covers at least a portion of the absorbent body.

19. (Amended) Absorbent article for maintaining mucous membranes of a user  
moist, the absorbent article comprising:

a liquid-pervious surface layer,  
a liquid-impervious surface layer, and  
an absorbent body enclosed between the two surface layers,  
wherein the article further exhibits a wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent  
the mucous membranes of the user, which is the region of the liquid-pervious surface layer  
which is intended to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,

wherein the liquid-pervious surface layer within the wetting region is constituted of  
hydrophilic absorbent material that is adapted to retain moisture, at least at the surface of  
the liquid-pervious surface layer which is intended to be facing the user during use so as to

maintain the mucous membranes of the user moist, and that all remaining parts of the liquid-pervious surface layer are constituted of a hydrophobic material, and wherein at least a portion of the remaining parts of the liquid-pervious surface layer extend over the absorbent body.

20. (Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 16, wherein the wetting region covers at least a portion of the absorbent body.

22. (Amended) A method for maintaining a mucous membrane of a user moist with an absorbent article, the absorbent article including an absorbent body, a liquid impervious layer, and a liquid pervious layer, the liquid pervious layer constituting both a hydrophobic material and a hydrophilic absorbent material, where the hydrophilic absorbent material forms a wetting region of the liquid pervious layer that is a region that is intended to be first wetted by body fluid and all remaining parts of the liquid-pervious layer are hydrophobic, the absorbent body being enclosed between the liquid pervious layer and the liquid impervious layer, the method comprising:

wearing the absorbent article such that the wetting region is adjacent the mucous membrane of the user and the wetting region receives body fluids emitted from the user;

retaining at least a portion of the body fluids in the hydrophilic absorbent material;  
and  
maintaining the mucous membrane of the user moist with the body fluids retained in  
the hydrophilic absorbent material of the wetting region,  
wherein at least a portion of the remaining parts of the liquid-pervious surface layer extend  
over the absorbent body.